

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /034 W
-----123832 202013Z /46

O R 201900Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9610
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMCONSUL KADUNA
USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, NI
SUBJECT: BILATERAL AVIATION AGREEMENT:
747S AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

REF: (A) LAGOS 8927, (B) STATE 182689 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: IN JULY 20 MEETING BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND
PERMSEC CIVAIR MIN., FMG REPRESENTATIVES SAID THERE
SHOULD BE NO OBSTACLE TO PAN AMERICAN'S (PAA) USE
OF 747 AIRCRAFT AS SOON AS NEW AIRPORT IS READY
(APRIL ESTIMATE). FMG ALSO GAVE AGREEMENT IN
PRINCIPLE TO TECHNICAL COOPERATION DISCUSSIONS
BETWEEN NIGERIA AIRWAYS (WT) AND PAA. BOTH STATE-
MENTS WERE IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE
ALONG LINES SET OUT IN REFTELS. END SUMMARY.

1) ACCOMPANIED BY ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND BY EMBASSY
TRANSPORT OFFICER, AMBASSADOR EASUM DESCRIBED PAA
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OFFER TO WORK WITH WT TO INCREASE ITS PROFITABILITY
ON THE NEW YORK RUN. HE ALSO EXPLAINED PAA
DESIRE TO INTRODUCE 747'S ON THE AFRICAN ROUTE
IN ORDER TO INCREASE ITS WORLDWIDE LEVEL OF
EFFICIENCY.

2) PERMSEC EHIZUENLEN, FLANKED BY PRINCIPAL

SECRETARY ADEGBENRO AND CIVAIR MINISTRY'S LEGAL ADVISOR, EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE FMG PLACES ON PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. HE IMPLIED SIMILAR ATTACHMENT TO PROCEDURES FOR PRIOR APPROVAL WHEN EXPRESSING HIS OPINION THAT PRESENT AGREEMENT WITH U.S. IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THOSE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. THEREFORE, FMG HAS CONCLUDED THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSTITUTING NEW FREQUENCIES SHOULD BE NO DIFFERENT.

3) PERMSEC STATED HE SAW NO REASON WHY THE TWO AIRLINES COULD NOT WORK OUT A COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT. MEETINGS ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO AIRLINES WOULD HAVE HIS MINISTRY'S BLESSING. PERMSEC WOULD REPORT THIS TO WT OFFICIALS, AND PAA SHOULD FEEL FREE TO CONTACT WT DIRECTLY TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS.

4) AS FOR INTRODUCTION OF 747'S THE PERMSEC SAID IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO INTRODUCE SUCH SERVICE IN DECEMBER OF 1978 AS REQUESTED BY PAA, SINCE NEW AIRPORT WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED BEFORE APRIL 1979 AT EARLIEST. NOTING THAT HE HAD TAKEN QUOTE A REAL BATTERING ON THIS IN THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL YESTERDAY UNQUOTE, EHIZEUNLEN SAID THAT OPENING DATE HAD BEEN PUT BACK ON THREE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OCCASIONS. CURRENT OBSTACLES INVOLVED LACK OF WATER AND POWER SUPPLY TO THE AIRPORT (WHICH WILL BE SELF-SUFFICIENT WHEN COMPLETED). POINTING OUT THAT THERE IS NO CAPACITY LIMITATION IN THE AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, HE SAID HE "FORESAW NO OBSTACLE" TO 747 SERVICE WHEN THE AIRPORT FACILITIES WERE READY. WHEN QUERIED BY AMBASSADOR REGARDING WRITTEN CONFIRMATION OF PAA'S RIGHT TO BRING IN WIDE BODIED SERVICES, EHIZUENLEN STATED THAT THE EARLIEST TIME WHEN CIVAIR WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SUCH A REPLY WOULD BE DECEMBER 1978. BY THAT TIME HE THOUGHT THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETERMINE MORE PRECISELY THE DATE WHEN THE NEW AIRPORT FACILITIES WOULD BE READY.

5) COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR FROM OUR CONVERSATION TODAY THAT THE NIGERIANS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT, UNDER THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT, THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO AN EQUAL SHARE OF THE MARKET AND THE RIGHT TO APPROVE CHANGES IN FREQUENCIES. HOWEVER, WE FEEL MINISTRY HAS CONCEDED THE ISSUE OF THE THREE 747 FREQUENCIES.

6) WHEN WE REPORTED TODAY'S DISCUSSIONS TO LOCAL PAA MANAGER DENAZARIO HE STATED HE FEARED THAT THE NIGERIANS WERE THINKING OF A POOLING ARRANGEMENT. HE THOUGHT THIS MIGHT HAVE ANTI-TRUST IMPLICATIONS. ANY HIGH-LEVEL TEAM OF PAA OFFICIALS COMING OUT TO MEET WITH NIGERIA AIRWAYS SHOULD KEEP THIS IN MIND.

7) REVIEWING WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN RECENT WEEKS, WE BELIEVE EVENTS COULD HAVE GONE MORE SMOOTHLY IF PAA'S LOCAL OFFICE HAD, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, MAINTAINED CLOSER RELATIONS WITH MINISTRY AND WT OFFICIALS. OTHER AIRLINES OPERATING IN LAGOS TAKE A MUCH MORE INFORMAL AND COOPERATIVE APPROACH AND HAVE A SYMPATHETIC NETWORK OF CONTACTS TO DRAW UPON. IT MIGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE HELPFUL IF DEPT. SUGGESTED TO PAA HEADQUARTERS THAT QUOTE HANDS-OFF UNQUOTE POLICY SET IN U.S. BE ADJUSTED IN ORDER BETTER TO SUIT THE NIGERIAN ENVIRONMENT. PAA PERSONNEL HERE ARE VERY GOOD REPRESENTATIVES WHO SHOULD BE VERY EFFECTIVE IN CONTACT WORK IF THEIR COMPANY PERMITTED THEM TO DO SO. EASUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AVIATION AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS08983
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780298-1010
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780739/aaaabgjs.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b26ba66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LAGOS 8927, 78 STATE 182689
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1941744
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BILATERAL AVIATION AGREEMENT: 747S AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION
TAGS: EAIR, NI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b26ba66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014